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Commentary

For a man who flopped so heavily as a dramatist when he was alive, Henry James has gone down pretty well on the English stage over the past fifteen years or so. But he has made good as an adaptor, not as an original dramatist; the cause on his own plays persists, the recent production at the Mermaid Theatre of *The Other House* having lasted only four weeks. It looks as if James's novels and stories are more presentable than his plays, and that unless it is draughted out by an adaptor his whole mode of writing remains tortuously a-dramatic. His own experience partly supports this, since he had a limited success at least when he adapted *The American*.

James's most mortifying and catastrophic rebuff in the theatre was the first night of *Guy Domville*: the details of his humiliation are given in the *Autobiography* of H. G. Wells, who saw the play as the critic of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Wells's that "the entire workmanship was too delicate for acting", a judgment that most readers would want to extend to James's novels. Anyone turning one of these into a play is right to be inhibited by the dismal episode of *Guy Domville* and to refine his own version of James accordingly, not allowing in too much of James's lovingly mannered dialogue, which was surely never written to be heard. It could on the other hand be maintained that a contemporary audience, brought up on grippingly uneventful playwrights like Beckett and Pinter, will put up with and even appreciate a higher degree of stylization in the dialogue than an audience of 1895.

These contrary views of the acceptability on the stage of James's words should by rights have been the main issue in last week's set to over the production of *The Spoils of Poynton* at the Mayfair Theatre. The author, Professor Robert Manson Myers, believed that its dialogue needed to be much more concise than that in the novel; the director, Mr. Basil Ashmore, took the other view, that the conversations in the book could be transcribed unaltered. Professor Myers, however, did not know that Mr. Ashmore had taken steps to implement his conviction; when Professor Myers finally discovered what let the production go ahead, an act arguably more dramatic than anything in *The Spoils of Poynton* itself. Because the differences between Professor Myers and Mr. Ashmore have more than merely personal repercussions, and because they were drowned in the crude publicity of the first night, it is worth chronicling them in some detail.

Professor Myers made his adaptation nearly twenty years ago, but got no chance of having it produced until 1968. When he arrived in England from America in June of this year it was arranged that if there was to be a production it should be directed by Mr. Ashmore. On June 7, in a letter to Professor Myers, Mr. Ashmore said the script was "excellent" and looked forward to making it "come to life on the stage". A little later Professor Myers agreed to have the play done at a "try-out" theatre, in the usual hope of compelling enough admiration to justify moving it to the West End.

Rehearsals of *The Spoils of Poynton* began on August 11. On August

12, Professor Myers was rung up by the producer and told that his script was too short—presumably on the strength of such rehearsals as had already taken place. This caused Professor Myers to telephone Mr. Ashmore, who told him that the complaint had been exaggerated, and that he must continue to trust him as the director. At Mr. Ashmore's request, Professor Myers had agreed to stay away from all the rehearsals before the first dress rehearsal, though his contract naturally gave him the right to be present. The same clause of the contract also stated that "no alteration of the script or title thereof shall be made without the Author's written consent".

In a letter on August 16, Mr. Ashmore asked Professor Myers, when he next adapted James, to "trust James to provide splendid dialogue", and quoted the Mermaid Theatre production of *The Other House*, which he had himself helped to adapt. (It is ironic in view of what was happening to *The Spoils of Poynton* that the problem with James's own play seems to have been to abridge it too far: four hours to something more orthodox.) In another letter on August 21, Mr. Ashmore again extolled James's own dialogue, but again without any indication that this was relevant to the play he was rehearsing. In his reply to these two letters, Professor Myers questioned the good sense of such simple transcriptions of words from a novel to the stage; he declared the philosophy was that the dialogue needed pruning "to make the dramatic and fast-moving". On August 23, Mr. Ashmore wrote saying that he wanted to convert Professor Myers "to the idea that James's own dialogue is ideally suited to acting", that modern audiences and critics "find his own words are utterly fascinating". On August 27, still in a letter, he told Professor Myers that his script felt "far short of a proper evening's length", and that he had extended it with dialogue taken verbatim from the novel.

In spite of this, Professor Myers still felt restrained by his promise not to interfere in the rehearsals, and concluded that any intervention now would, in any case, come too late. He did not see his play until August 31, two nights before it was meant to open. He found it so denatured in the dialogue, though his structure had survived, that he refused to let it go on, dismayed by the distance it had travelled from his own script. He later did allow the production, since the producer would otherwise have broken his contract with the management of the theatre. *The Spoils of Poynton* has not had much success; each performance has been preceded by the author's disclaimer and, as produced, it has run for about two hours twenty minutes, with intervals.

This dismal affair provokes similar questions about directorial intrusion to those raised here some weeks ago in connexion with a German production of Edward Albee's *Everything in the Garden*. The acceptance, notably among theatre critics conditioned to compare productions as much as to judge plays, of a "director's theatre" can have damaging consequences for an inexperienced playwright like Professor Myers. No doubt a director should be able to adjust a script, as he thinks appropriate, provided the author agrees. In the case of

The Spoils of Poynton it was altered without consent, since Professor Myers was never told about the massive alterations to his text.

Nor was he ever invited to produce his own cure for the alleged shortness of what he had written. Indeed, he could not agree that the script was anything like as short as the director maintained. Mr. Ashmore was quoted in *The Guardian* as saying that, with intervals, *The Spoils* would have lasted only sixty-five minutes. Professor Myers had himself timed his script at ninety minutes. It contains fifty-nine quarto pages of typescript, including the stage directions, which are not extensive. Few pages of it could be decently spoken in under a minute and a quarter, which makes Professor Myers's own timing plausible enough. Since *The Spoils*, as performed, lasted 140 minutes, Mr. Ashmore should, in theory, have added seventy-five minutes of additional dialogue. The prompt copy of the play shows that he did indeed add a great deal, but he also cut out some of what Professor Myers had written, so any definitive comparison of the two scripts would be very difficult. But it is a remarkable event when the director of a play stretches a text, by his own calculations, to double its original length, all the more so when he had started out by saying that the script was "excellent".

One of the grosser incongruities of the situation has been that Professor Myers and Mr. Ashmore seem to have reversed the roles expected of them. Professor Myers, a professor of English Literature at the University of Maryland whose scholarly publications are listed in the Mayfair Theatre's programme, was the one ready to revamp Henry James. Mr. Ashmore, far from having to slap this literary nian down for his naivety in respect of the box office, has instead emerged as the champion of the novelist. Much of what he was quoted as saying in the newspapers about Professor Myers's luckless script was clearly intended to identify him with the interests of the "Jamesians", whom he alerted to a "bowdlerised and emasculated" version of *The Spoils of Poynton* and a "precis" of the novel's own words (*The Financial Times*). (It was no doubt to offset this emasculation that several newspapers illustrated the story with the attractions of Kate O'Mara, the actress who has been playing Fleda Vetch in the play and who, as seen in side-view, will certainly not be all Jamesian's idea of the Master's shrinking and over-scrupulous heroine.)

It cannot have happened very often before in the theatre that an author has lost possession of his play as comprehensively as Professor Myers did, without any chance to intervene until four days before the first dress rehearsal. He was, of course, mis-

guided to agree to an earlier rehearsal, which is a common practice, but standing the letter sent by Myers on August 21, what he did surely defies logic.

Students labouring to master critical vocabularies should find an excellent new explanatory book, which is publishing under the heading "The Critical Language", edited by John D. Lyons. It starts out with six titles and numbers 1 and 2 (though the book is only 110 pages long) and goes over very nimbly by Clifford Leech and John Firth, but they are followed by a list of the first mature novel-usefully abstruse concepts—*Salvo-Valica*, had already been used in Swedish, Danish, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Polish, Russian, Czech, Hungarian, German, and Czech. It is therefore a welcome addition to the orderly marshalling of terminology, the provision of lines for future reading, the certain amount of overlap with educational works—though uncertainty about the likely audience sophistication is like "It is common knowledge" apologetically introduced. The book is a reference to "The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature" and in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Literature* (1943), pp. 101-102, books cost 10s. each (paper 7s.), and future matters to be considered include *Allegory*, *Irony*, and *The Picaresque*.

At a meeting of the education of the British Association in London on Tuesday, Dr. E. G. Lewis mounted a fierce attack on the linguistic theories of Noam Chomsky, who said that teachers could influence the verbal skills of pupils, with his "deep structure" and postulation of a universal grammar. Dr. Lewis argued that language is not a set of rules of grammar but an open system of communication. He encouraged teachers to encourage their pupils to use language, not to teach them the rules of grammar. He said that the effect of Chomsky's theory was to limit a child's acquisition of language. Dr. Lewis said that he had anything to do with the matter. He said that he had anything to do with the matter.

Is extravagance an economy?

Leonée Ormond's long book on George du Maurier seemed to need ample reproduction of his drawings for *Punch*, and careful design. If each book has a proper scope, this received it—and the cost alarmed every one because its price had to be six guineas. Result: a reprint is ordered within six months and a cable has just been received from an American publisher asking for another supply urgently.

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The Icelandic microcosm



and demonstrates with masterly clarity that they are alive even in that strange environment. They stand out with biting clarity because of the author's indignation, Dickensian in its genuine hatred of all the savage inhumanity which they practise under the mask of charity, progress or good government. Certainly no one can read *World Light* without coming away with a greatly sharpened realization of the thinness of the mask of commercially motivated benevolence, or *The Fish Can Sing* without a deeper feeling for the debasement of art at the hands of charlatans and commercial exploiters. The glamour of these unhealthy things is not missed, and the child's eye view sees Garþar Hölm as the great artist who Güðmúnsen's publicity men make him out to be, and De La Gvendur Güðmúnsen as the liberal and disinterested patron of the arts—until the child begins to look at the idols with the discerning eyes of his unassuming but clear-sighted grand-children, whereupon the great singer dissolves into a posturing vagabond and the great patron into a sordid purveyor of gimmicks to advertise his shop. And in the same way Pétur Pálsson, manager and dispenser of all things good in the remote fishing-hamlet of Svínsvík, comes out in his true colours as an unscrupulous old satyr with a liking for young girls. Yet Björn Leirum is also redeemed by the sheer vigour of his appetites, as a strong man whose tastes are the corollaries of wrestling with the harsh nature of the land and sea for his livelihood, and who, in opposition to the mean-spirited Pétur or Gvendur, is a man who takes his enjoyment in an open and healthy way, unworried by the inhibitions of a middle-class urban morality.

This, then, is the second main element in Laxness's work. However much the vice that dominates his character disgusts him, and his indignation is terrible when unleashed at full force, as in his description of how the farmer Jónas bullies the

miserable Ólafur Kármann into writing doggerel for him, he is very conscious of the truth that no man is so totally lost to his guiding emotion as to be a cardboard figure driven by one instinct. The result gives a depth and breadth to Laxness's mature work, except when he is under the influence of a stray-line passion, such as that evoked by the negotiations over an American air base in Iceland, in which *The Atom Station*, with its preponderance of caricature, was conceived and completed. Yet even there the author's compassion can be seen softening his anger—compassion for the degraded, helplessly floundering children who suffer from their parents' dehumanizing greed for wealth and the trappings of social snobbery, compassion for the healthy girl with simple, healthy instincts who is bewildered and hurt on being thrown into the artificial life of a diseased city where the two nations war incessantly against each other, and where values are everywhere debased by artifice.

In the same way Laxness may, in *World Light*, have only contempt for Ólafur Kármann the poet, may condemn him alike for his bungling of his life and his verse, but it is a contempt softened by his real compassion for the miserable soul who, through the accident of an unfortunate birth, came to grow up in an environment where he could only be a stunted and enfeebled personality. Similarly Ólafur's mistress and wife, Jarpróður, behaves in a way which deliberately shows her to be endowed with only a feeble parody of the nobler emotions of wifehood and motherhood, but the disgust felt at her behaviour is counteracted by our realization that no other person could have been produced by her diseased stock and her inhuman upbringing. The idea is not merely loaded against such people, but they are seen to be loaded.

All these qualities are clear enough in the available English versions of Laxness's novels. Unfortunately, what cannot be conveyed, even in the most accurate of them, is the thing which stands out most clearly to his country-

men, the style. "Kiljunska", as an early critic who wanted to be rude called it, is a form of language which has no possible equivalent in English. Mr. Magnússon admits this with commendable honesty at the end of his introduction:

It would be arrogant even to hope that the full magnificence of the original has survived this sea change into English; there are subtleties of cadence in the style, there is a wealth of vocabulary that would beggar Roger himself, there is a living, speaking language rooted in the culture of the people that no alien language can properly reproduce.

After wrestling for twenty years with *Islandsdækkun*, where this wealth is seen at its most profuse and exasperating, the present reviewer endorses this statement in the most forcible manner. For it is not that Laxness cannot be translated in the old-fashioned, Wardour Street sense of the word, it is that such translation provides only a worse parody of the original than even Roh'n's licks contrived to produce of the Greek and Latin classics, and to render him intelligible to the English reader much must be lost.

The reason for this difficulty is that Laxness was rebelling against a linguistic convention under which Icelandic prose fiction was becoming as petrified as modern "literary" Russian. The novelists who preceded him in the mainstream of Icelandic letters had evolved a consciously pure "literary" style, originally in rebellion against the half-Danicized "Civil Service" style which had become an abomination in the eyes of the leaders of the Nationalist movement of the early nineteenth century, but which had in turn become so anemically free from Danishisms, dialectal words or peculiarities of idiom that when any of Laxness's immediate predecessors let one of these slip into their text the result was a shock to the reader similar to the one received on the hearing of a swear-word from a B.R.C. news-announcer in the reign of Lord Reith. There is little doubt that these honest men were acting with the best of intentions, as a means of restoring the purity of the tongue as they imagined it had been, but in doing so they were being unwittingly false to their own foundations, as may be seen by the fact that one of the principal strengths of Jón Thoroddsen's novels is the acuteness of his ear, and his delight in the comical malformations of language which are produced by the uneducated and the would-be-educated and which form the material with which he builds up such oddities as *Groða á Leiti* in *Boy and Girl*.

In this respect Laxness has gone back to the source for his inspiration, but he has gone much farther, for Thoroddsen kept these things to life comic members of his cast, while Laxness refuses to employ such a self-denying ordinance, and has used this wider linguistic frame as a means of expanding Thoroddsen's comparatively narrow emotional range of elaborating and sophisticating his primitive linguistic apparatus. For this purpose, the author has drawn on the source of inspiration for him in the work of Benedikt Gröndal (1826-1907) a brilliant writer of immense fantasy in whose two magnificent saga-parodies, *Sagan af Heljarðórnastu* and *Þorvar saga Gættundarsonar*, the old tradition of prose storytelling closed with a riotous bang, while at the same time they were to be the heralds of a new form that did not come into serious literary use for nearly half a century, for in them are the roots of Laxness's manner of conducting dialogue between his characters.

Once again, however, the emotional range Laxness uses is far wider than that of his original, as well as more realistic, in the strict literary sense of the word, for where Gröndal was content to look for the entertainment value alone, Laxness uses the quality of incongruity for numerous other ends, and directs his vast wealth of word and phrase with a skill that was far beyond the older man's. He attempted to quarry from this particular root in order to escape the hardening of the language of education, the language of the school, the language of the office, the language of the shop, the language of the street, the language of the home, the language of the church, the language of the law, the language of the army, the language of the navy, the language of the air force, the language of the police, the language of the fire service, the language of the coast guard, the language of the customs service, the language of the excise service, the language of the revenue service, the language of the tax service, the language of the finance service, the language of the treasury service, the language of the public service, the language of the civil service, the language of the military service, the language of the naval service, the language of the air force service, the language of the coast guard service, the language of the customs service, the language of the excise service, the 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Parabibliography

FREDERICK P. W. McDOWELL and E. SHARON GRAVES (Editors): *The Angus Wilson Manuscripts in the University of Iowa Libraries: a Catalogue*. 24pp. Iowa City: Friends of the University of Iowa Libraries.

M. TRIESCH: *The Lillian Hellman Collection at the University of Texas*. 163pp. University of Texas Press (American University Publishers Group). £3.15.

LAURENCE G. AVERY: *A Catalogue of the Maxwell Anderson Collection at the University of Texas*. 175pp. University of Texas Press (American University Publishers Group). £3.15.

LINTON R. MASSEY (Editor): *Man Working 1919-1982: William Faulkner*. A catalogue of the William Faulkner Collection at the University of Virginia. 250pp. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. \$25.

These four publications represent what seems to be a new development in parabibliographical studies: akin to Mr. Warren Barnes's *The Browning Collection at the University of Texas* (reviewed in TLS on May 16, 1968), yet each varying in one respect or another from that particular formula. The Iowa booklet gives an admirably practical descriptive account of the manuscripts of the only English author in the group, down to *Not a Laughing Matter*, published in 1967, and including that of an uncompleted novel, *Good and Complicated*, seemingly abandoned in 1961. Copies of

Mr. Wilson's first editions with inscriptions offering "additional insights into his attitudes, methods and purposes", were on show with the manuscripts last April, though they are not here described. And from the preface, the promise that "the present collection hopefully will be supplemented by future manuscripts and other materials" we are encouraged to infer that for the literary critics of today and the historians of tomorrow Iowa City will now be the home of "the Angus Wilson archive".

The two Texan catalogues and the Charlotteville double-columned quarto tribute to William Faulkner, while studiously eschewing any claim to being "bibliographies" (with the implication that they should be comprehensive, nevertheless are such in effect, as well as being much more. In the case of Lillian Hellman the space occupied by her published plays is small in comparison with the wealth of manuscripts, typescripts, drafts, plot outlines, "treatments", and other manifestations of that fiery and restless intelligence, nevertheless the published books are given the full bibliographical treatment. For Maxwell Anderson, Section A, Published Works (Soho style), occupies forty-eight pages, though here again there are substantial sections for unpublished works (forty-one pages), letters, diaries, etc.

Both these volumes are fully and enlighteningly illustrated. For William Faulkner, Mr. Linton Massey's even simpler pictorial coverage includes, by way of reinforcement to the bibliographical descriptions, useful repro-

ductions of the title-pages of the original editions—even if he does not tell us how to distinguish the two reported variants of that expensive rarity, *The Marble Faun* 1924. Although a rival institution, the University of Texas, issued in 1959 an exhibition catalogue of the Faulkner manuscripts at Austin (including that of *Abolition*, *Abolition* and some interesting corrected proofs of *Sanctuary*), and although the Faulkner territory is not in Virginia but in Mississippi, the combination of Mr. Massey's dedicated voracity as a private collector of his work and the subsequent attachment to the University of the Maestro himself as "Writer-in-Residence" has resulted in the aggregation at Charlottesville of what the late lamented John Cook Wylie was probably justified in calling in his introduction to *Man Working*, "one of the largest and most important assemblages of works by and relating to any single modern author"; much of the manuscript and typescript material being "on deposit" in the Alderman Library from the William Faulkner Foundation and from the Estate. In the arrangement of this generally instructive and useful book, Mr. Massey has committed one barely pardonable solecism: the contents of the first two sections, on novels and short stories (unlike the third section, on verse), are set out not chronologically, as the history of his author's literary career (and bibliographical convention) require, but alphabetically by title, so that *Soldiers' Pay* 1926 is not, as it should be, Massey I, but Massey 304.

JACQUES MARITAIN: *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. Translated by Joseph W. Evans. 144pp. Herder and Herder. London: Burns and Oates. 30s.

M. Maritain had hoped that *Le Pape Jean XXIII* would be his last book, and excused *De la grâce et de l'humanité de Jésus*, here translated into English, on the ground that it stems from the text which he had prepared earlier for two research meetings with the men in charge of the Little Brothers of Jesus at Toulouse. The structure of the two meetings is preserved in a "first approach" of a general character and a second approach of a deeper, more systematic nature.

Though he appears to himself as "an old man who seeks to read the Gospel artlessly and as best he can", M. Maritain cannot divest himself of the scholastic modes, in which so much of his thought has been cast. Whether he wills it or not, he

does in fact read the Gospel through the eyes of the Thomist, and his reading is accepted, his reading is worse for it. It is for the fundamental proposition that was at the same time a dogma and a vision, a discipline enough to those trained in the ready grasp of the Thomist, but not likely to be readily grasped by the Thomist.

Another of M. Maritain's mental beliefs is the absolute unity of the moment of life of Christ. From the young virgin of Israel to the sovereignty at the right hand of Father, he discerns eight lead imperceptibly one into another. This perspective of Christ's life and death as a unity with the wisdom, which Maritain's writing, that may be said, is not too much full of grace.

Books to come

Selected books announced for October.

Arts
HUGH HONOUR: *Cabinet Makers and Furniture Designers*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
PAUL OVERY: *Kandinsky*. Elek Books.
JOHN WATKINS: *The Art of the Dramatist*. (Essays and articles.) Alan Ross.

Bibliography and Memoirs
STEFANIA ALLIQUINTA: *Only One Year*. Hutchinson.

LOVELL DRESSON: *H. G. Wells: His Turbulent Life and Times*. Macmillan.

LILLIAN HILLMAN: *An Unfinished Woman* (Autobiography). Macmillan.

DIANA HOLMAN-HUNT: *My Grandfather*. His Wives and Loves. Hamish Hamilton.

THOMAS JONES: *Whitehall Diary*. Vol. 2. Oxford University Press.

JOHN MASTERS: *Cavanna*. Michael Joseph.

KATH MIDDLETON and JOHN BARNES: *Buddha*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

SHERIDAN MORLEY: *A Talent to Amuse*. (Life of Noel Coward.) Heinemann.

R. H. MOTTAM: *The Twentieth Century*. (Autobiography). Hutchinson.

JOHN PEARSON: *The Brothers Army*. Cape.

REGINALD POUND: *Sir Henry Wood*. Cassell.

LEONARD WOOLFE: *The Journey into the Archaic*. (Fifth volume of autobiography.) Hogarth Press.

Fiction
ERIC AMBLER: *The Intercon Conspiracy*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

KNOXLEY AMIS: *The Green Man*. Cape.

MEVYN BRAGO: *The Hired Man*. Secker and Warburg.

PATRICK SKEENE CATLING: *Fredrick Hill*. Bodley Head.

BERNARD MALAMUD: *Pictures of Fidelman*. Eyre and Spottiswoode.

VLADEMIR NABOKOV: *Ada*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

PIERS PAUL READ: *Monk Dawson*. Secker and Warburg.

J. M. STEWART: *Cucumber Sandwiches*. Gillian Tindall.

GILLIAN TINDALL: *Someone Else*. Hodder and Stoughton.

WILLIAM TREVOR: *Boys' Eddors in O'Neill's Hotel*. Bodley Head.

CALDER WILLINGHAM: *Providence Island*. Rupert Hart-Davis.

History
J. P. V. D. BALSDON: *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome*. Bodley Head.

GEORGINA BATTISCOMBE: *Queen Alexandra*. Constable.

MAX BELOFF: *Imperial Sunset*. Vol. 1. Britain's Liberal Empire, 1891-1921.

RUSSELL BRADDON: *The Slave* (Kugel Amara, 1915-16). Cape.

JOHN BURNHAM: *The Younger Pitt*. Constable.

JOCK HASWELL: *The First Respectable Spy*. (Colquhoun Grant, Wellington's Information Officer). Hamish Hamilton.

GEORGE KATKOV: *The Trial of Bukharin*. Batsford.

WALLACE MACCARTHY: *The Edinburgh Region*. Corgi.

THOMAS M. PARSONS: *The Liberty Irish War of 1796 and Slough*.

JOANNA RICHMOND: *The Irish*. Macmillan.

JONATHAN SPIGEL: *The Irish*. (Western edition, 1620-1960). Bodley Head.

FRANCIS WATSON: *The Irish*. Macmillan.

R. L. WHITE: *The Irish*. (French philosophy). Macmillan.

ROBERT L. WILSON: *The Irish*. (1870-1). Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Literature
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the researches of John Colgan and other scholars. The last guardians of the college successfully resisted the demands of Napoleon's officers and transferred their archives to Rome—whence they came later to Ireland—and their library direct to Wexford. Charming letters from Luke Bellevue, president of the Irish college at Douai during the Revolution, add human interest to the administrative records.

Manuscripts and Men. 197pp. H.M.S.O. 20s.

This summer's manuscript exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, where the 200 exhibits are drawn from some of the greatest private collections in the country, appropriately marks the centenary of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. *Manuscripts and Men* is rather more than a catalogue, being also an account of how the Commission began and of the work it has since accomplished, including as it now does the publication of reports on some 800 collections. From eighteen of the chief of these the exhibited manuscripts have been chosen, and their range in time and subject is very wide. Brief histories of the collections from which they come are also included in this commemorative volume.

MAYER, EDWARD. *The Curriers and the City of London.* 212pp. The Worshipful Company of Curriers. 23s.

How important leather has been to the variety of men who have dealt with it through the centuries in the City of London. For the curriers Mr. Mayer claims that they have added a word to the language: elbow-greave, he says, came from their hard labour in rubbing tallow into the hides—one would like to see Mr. Mayer's evidence for this assertion. The Company of Curriers has not been wealthy: at Henry V's funeral they supplied only four torch-bearers and nearly four hundred years later they would not take part

in Nelson's funeral because of the expense. They were glad to add to their income by letting out their hall not only to other companies but to preachers and dancing teachers. They were strict in their statutory laws for their apprentices: nothing could be worn on the head but a woollen cap—rings, swords and daggers forbidden.

NEWSOME, DAVID. *Bishop Westcott and the Platonic Tradition.* 39pp. Cambridge University Press. 3s.

The text of the Bishop Westcott memorial lecture delivered at Cambridge in 1968.

VARMA, D. N. *India and the League of Nations.* 350pp. Patna: Bharati Bhawan. Rs.30.

It is often held to be axiomatic, not least in India, that the League of Nations served little useful purpose, its failures were so conspicuous, its successes so few, its demise largely unregretted. Yet, from the Indian point of view, as Mr. Varma shows in this useful and scholarly book, it marked the true entry of India into the wider sphere of international affairs and was among the more important of the factors enabling independent India to seize, and to hold for a number of years, the position of acknowledged spokesman for Asia in the League's more powerful and more influential successor, the United Nations. India's membership of the League of Nations not only gave her a valuable platform for expounding her point of view; it also enabled her to educate the statesmen of the western world into an appreciation of the growing importance of Asia. From the purely legal standpoint, as Mr. Varma makes clear, India's position in the League of Nations was highly anomalous: she was not an independent country; she had no control even of her own domestic affairs; in foreign policy she had no influence, in theory at least, over the line which Britain might choose to follow. Yet in spite of these handi-

caps, her representatives built up for themselves a solid reputation as experts not only in Indian but also in Asian affairs; their advice was increasingly sought and increasingly valued. So when the opportunity of the United Nations came, they stepped at once into their rightful place. This is an excellent book, well documented, well indexed, and well written.

Literature and Criticism

BROWN, IVOR. *A Rhapsody of Words.* 144pp. Bodley Head. 18s. To a Puritan people like the English, deprivation can be frustrating. The current ethos of our love lives was wobbled by the sexually deprived Havelock Ellis, Marie Stopes and D. H. Lawrence, and it was, we now learn, the deprivation of the English language imposed by a Classical education that led Ivor Brown to the verbal vagaries which resulted in his many loving little books about words. *A Rhapsody of Words* is the latest of these, and it will, like the others, delight his devoted readers, many of whom, we might guess, have also suffered verbal deprivations and appreciate mildly learned meanderings in the backwoods of lexicography and literature.

Social Studies

ELLMANN, MARY. *Thinking About Women.* 240pp. Macmillan. 36s. "Sexual Analogy." "Phallic Criticism." "Feminine Stereotypes." Punch drunk with permissiveness as we currently are, one may perhaps be forgiven if the heart does not leap at a first sight of Miss Ellmann's chapter headings. The Feminine Stereotypes are the heart of the matter. The author's thesis is that male thinking about women is made up of them. True, no doubt, and in so far as most people's thinking about most things consists of an arrangement of stereotypes—genuinely original cerebration is a minority activity—it would be strange if it

were not so. Yet however true, making a book of it means that the idea has to be spun out pretty thin. The tone of donnish facetiousness becomes progressively tiresome, just as jokes which quite possibly convulsed lecture halls at Wellesley and Roosevelt University, where the author taught English ("Ordinarily, even couples named Beasley want boys, else the name-will-die-out") leave the reader dry-eyed.

SHOBERG, GORDON (Editor). *Ethics, Politics and Social Research.* 358pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £2.10s.

A number of American social scientists have contributed essays on some of the important problems of ethics posed by social research. The book is divided into two parts. The first—"Views from the Outside"—reviews problems "in the third person"; the topics include ethical problems in the relations between research sponsors and research workers, government intervention in social research, and the influence of outside pressure-groups on research institutes. The second part—"Views from the Inside"—is made up of personal accounts by research workers of their own experiences.

Sports and Pastimes

PEEBLES, IAN. *'Pussy' Henderson.* 183pp. Macmillan. 36s. The sub-title "the cricketer and his times" admirably sums up the book's plan and purpose: for, while Mr. Peebles is never in any danger of composing a sociological study, he does on occasion stand back from the pitch to convey something of the life led by professional cricketers in the period between the wars, and the years immediately before the First World War. What he has to say is a healthy corrective to those who hold the view that, so long as the Gentlemen met the Players, the life of the player must have been a sad and degrading affair. Mr. Peebles does not rhapsodize but he

does make it plain that professionals came on a different gate to amateurs (of profound indifference to them), they and their colleagues managed to make quite a lot. Mr. Peebles habit, contrived to be out on being facetious and to stress that there were crowds, for instance, in celebration of his crowning achievement. It is possible to see tribute paid to Henderson in the field of the life sciences.

ROLY, L. T. C. *A History of Tasker 1809-1968.* 240pp. Abbot: David and Doris Tasker.

Taskers, now best known as trailers and semi-trailers, speaking lorries (and middle) were once, in the words of Foster or Burrell, a lot in agricultural engineering out scores of sets of their and other pieces of farm machinery. The firm was founded by a hand-working dissenting blacksmith for his strong religious views time it became one of the country works which did anything from a plough to iron bridge and produced in the "Little Giant" just. With the decline of the Taskers faced and summing up the decline and rise of the firm. They have a real "war" in the famous "Queen" calculated vehicles which caused so widely in the Second World War to recover crashed. Roly is very sound on local industrial history and with affection the almost problems of a country like

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